(ii) Several rare and endangered species of wild animals have been included in the Schedules of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby giving it highest degree of protection.

(iii) The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 has been amended and made more stringent. The punishment in cases of offences have been enhanced. The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that has been used for committing any wildlife offence.

(iv) Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been empowered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehend and prosecute wildlife offenders.

(v) Government of India has set up Regional and Sub-regional Offices for wildlife preservation in major export and trade centres of the country to prevent smuggling of wild animals and their products.

(vi) Financial and technical help is provided to the States under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, *viz.* Project Tiger, Project Elephant and Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure of the States for providing effective protection to wild animals.

(vii) A National Wildlife Action Plan 2002-16 was adopted by the Indian Board for Wild Life under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister in January 2002. The plan outlines the strategy for conservation and protection of wildlife in the country.

(viii) Government of India is a signatory to many international conventions concerning biodiversity conservation and control of illegal trade in wild flora and fauna.

Declaration against cruel and inhuman treatment of animals by PETA

1082. SHRI SHANKAR ROY CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether 'People for Ethical Treatment of Animals' (PETA), a foreign-based organization, has issued a declaration against cruel and inhuman

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treatment of animals (especially cattle) during the slaughtering process in India;

(b) if so, the steps Government propose to take for controlling and enforcing prevention of cruelty to animals in the legal and illegal slaughter houses in the country; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take to check illegal traffic of cattle to Bangladesh, where they are slaughtered in a most cruel and inhuman manner?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Environment & Forests has not received any declaration against cruel and inhuman treatment of animals from PETA. However Government of India has already formulated and notified the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Slaughter House) Rules, 2001, under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. These Rules have been circulated to the State Governments, Districts Authorities and others for controlling and enforcing prevention of cruelty to animals in the slaughter houses in the country.

(c) Under Rule 96 of the Transport of Animals Rules, 1978 as amended upto 2001, a valid certificate is required to be obtained by any person making transport of animals from an officer or any person or animal welfare organization duly recognized and authorized for this purpose by the Animal Welfare Board of India or the Central Government. These Rules are in force in the entire country except Jammu & Kashmir. The offenders for violation of these Rules can be prosecuted by the Police or the persons authorized by the State Government.

White Paper on Pollution in Delhi

1083. PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact the Government had made public a white paper on tackling pollution in Delhi in the year 1997-98; and

(b) if so, the action taken in respect of the decisions Government had announced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT